

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 MCT-01 SSM-03 CIAE-00  
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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EB-08 USSS-00 FAA-00 DOTE-00 CTME-00 /095 W  
-----118271 221737Z /40

O R 221655Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7311  
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USNMR SHAPE BEL  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT  
USMISSION USNATO  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 0495

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC  
USCINCEUR FOR POLAD  
USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PEPR, CY, EG, PLO  
SUBJECT: ROLE OF PLO IN LARNACE INCIDENT  
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1. ROLE OF PLO IN LARNACA AIRPORT FIREFIGHT BETWEEN  
EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS AND CYPRUS NATIONAL GUARD (CNG) IS  
MATTER OF DISPUTE. THAT PLO REPRESENTATIVES  
CAME TO CYPRUS FROM BEIRUT IS PUBLICLY KNOWN AND  
ADMITTED BY GOC. CONTROVERSY IS OVER QUESTION  
OF WHETHER PLO JOINED IN FIGHTING ON SIDE OF CNG,

WHICH GOC DENIES BUT, NEVERTHELESS, IS SUPPORTED BY SOME EVIDENCE.

2. ACCORDING TO GOC, PLO LEADER ARAFAT WAS CONTACTED BY PRESIDENT KYPRIANOU FEB 18. SUBSEQUENTLY A SPECIAL CYPRUS AIRWAYS BAC-111 WAS SENT TO BEIRUT TO PICK UP, ACCORDING TO NICOSIA RADIO, "PALESTINIAN LEADERS" TO ASSIST GOC IN ITS NEGOTIATIONS WITH TERRORISTS. EMBOFF AT LARNACA AIRPORT NOTED BAC-111 SHORTLY BEFORE DEPARTURE OF TERRORISTS AND HOSTAGES IN CYPRUS AIRWAYS DC-8 EVENING FEB 18. TWO PALESTINIANS, DESCRIBED TO EMBOFF AS PLO, DISEMBARKED AND CONSULTED WITH GOC MINISTERS IN AIRPORT VIP LOUNGE. AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE FEB 21, PRESIDENT KYPRIANOU WAS ASKED IF PALESTINIAN COMMANDOS HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE AIRPORT FIGHTING. KYPRIANOU ANSWERED, "THERE WERE NO ARMED COMMANDOS, BUT A PALESTINIAN DELEGATION, WHICH ARRIVED FROM BEIRUT THE PREVIOUS DAY ... WAS SENT BY MR. ARAFAT AT THE REQUEST OF THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERSUADING THE TWO MURDERERS TO RELEASE THE HOSTAGES AND SURRENDER."

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, AND CONFIRMING OTHER REPORTING, EMBOFFS AT LARNACA FEB 19 WERE TOLD BY SOURCES IN CYPRIOT POLICE THAT 16 "PLO" HAD ARRIVED ON BAC-111, PREVIOUS DAY, THAT THEIR PASSPORTS WERE BEING HELD BY POLICE AND THAT THEY

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WERE "SOMEWHERE AROUND." LATER, AS FIREFIGHT WANED, EMBOFFS SAW AND HEARD ARMED, PLAINCLOTHED ARABIC-SPEAKING INDIVIDUALS MOVING WITH CNG TROOPS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN TERMINAL AND ADJACENT ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS. DURING FIREFIGHT, EMBOFFS DID NOT SEE, AND WERE NOT IN POSITION TO SEE, WHETHER PLO PARTICIPATED IN FIGHTING. HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE EMBOFF QUERIES ABOUT IDENTITY ARAB SPEAKERS, POLICE STATED THAT INDIVIDUALS WERE "PLO" AND HAD "ASSISTED" NCG.

4. COMMENT. IN VIEW FOREGOING, PRESIDENT KYPRIANOU MAY BE PUTTING HIMSELF IN POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING POSITION BY FLATLY DENYING PRESENCE OF ARMED PALESTINIANS. ON OTHER HAND, LARGE NUMBER OF ARMED PLAINCLOTHED CNG AND POLICE OFFICIALS AT AIRPORT MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO CONCLUDE THAT PLAINCLOTHED INDIVIDUALS WHO DID PARTICIPATE IN FIGHTING AT AIRPORT WERE NECESSARILY PLO, ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE IT LIKELY.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PALESTINIANS, AIRCRAFT HIJACKING, LIBERATION FRONTS, TERRORISTS, AIRPORTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 22 feb 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Subject:** ROLE OF PLO IN LARNACE INCIDENT CONFIDENTIAL CONFIDENTIAL  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
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